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SUBJECT: ROMANIAN PRESIDENT WELCOMES MOLDOVAN YOUTH TO  
THEIR "HOMELAND," INVITES THEM TO REUNITE INSIDE EU

REF: BUCHAREST 00980

Classified By: DCM MARK TAPLIN FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) & (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: In remarks to a group of visiting Moldovan teenagers, President Basescu spoke in terms of Romania's hopes and plans to reunite with Moldova once inside the European Union. His statements, which included an "offer" to Moldova to join the EU along with Romania and a promise of more scholarships for Moldovan students and continued ease of access to Romania after accession, raised eyebrows among many Moldova-followers in Bucharest. MFA officials and the Moldovan Embassy deny that the president's words reflected any official offers or conversations between Romania and Moldova. The European Commission delegation suggested EC President Barosso, along with the Finnish presidency would deliver "private" messages to President Basescu regarding his statements. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Romanian President Traian Basescu announced to a group of Moldovan students on July 1 that "Romania has offered to the Republic of Moldova, to the Moldovan head of state, the option to join the European Union at the same time with us." He later added, "We are the only country, the only people that is still divided. Germany has reunited its nation; Romania is still divided between two countries. But, I repeat, our reunification will take place inside the European Union, not otherwise." He also said that once Romania accedes to the EU, he would try to simplify the visa system for Moldovans and "smooth the access of the citizens of Republic of Moldova to Romanian citizenship." A translation of the full text of his remarks, as posted in Romanian on the Romanian presidency website ([www.presidency.ro](http://www.presidency.ro)), is below in paragraph 7.

¶3. (C) According to Dan Iancu, Head of the Romanian MFA Bureau for Cooperation with Moldova, no such plan exists that is "written on paper." Romanian officials appeared unclear themselves over when Basescu might have pitched this idea to Moldovan President Voronin. Both Iancu and MFA Director General for Eastern Europe Razvan Rusu acknowledged that such a discussion could well have taken place between the two presidents. Iancu said that their last meeting was on December 10, 2005, during President Voronin's trip to Bucharest. Iancu suggested, however, that such a discussion would have more likely happened at the first meeting between Basescu and Voronin, in January 2005 in Chisinau. While the two presidents did not have a bilateral meeting during the June Black Sea Summit, he remarked, the two do talk frequently by phone. Iancu said that Basescu's visit to Chisinau, previously scheduled for July, would not likely occur until after the summer. He explained that Romania's approach to Moldova was to "attempt to build a new image for Moldovans" as a South Eastern European state in addition to being a CIS state. Iancu said Romanians and Moldovans would

"see each other in the EU, where borders don't matter." He said reunification is "not something we have in mind for now."

14. (C) The European Commission Delegation in Romania had no plans to respond to Basescu's statements on Moldova, according to the delegation's Political Analyst Sorin Moisu. However, he said that EC President Jose Manuel Barosso and the Finnish EU Presidency would raise the issue privately with Basescu. Moisu offered that the EC was still trying to make sense of Basescu's statements, noting both the "political and technical impossibility" of Basescu's offer for Moldova to join the EU with Romania. Moisu believed Russia and Ukraine would likely ask for clarification of Basescu's comments as well.

15. (C) Moldovan DCM Larissa Pasecinic commented to PolOff that "this is not the first such declaration," but added that Moldova is "very grateful to Basescu" for "presenting Moldova in international fora, making its problems more well known." She said Basescu's formulation had been oversimplified for his youthful audience, and was not a realistic version of any official discussions. She said the real concern was not the statement, but rather how it was being portrayed in the media and how it had "triggered negative events in Transnistria." She cited the July 5 press conference of Transnistrian "Security Minister" Antufeyev, who cited Basescu's remarks as a threat that required counterbalancing by supplementing the Russian troops in the region. Pasecinic said there was "no such official proposition from the Romanian government" and that Moldova's "future homework for EU accession was not so simple." Pasecinic said Basescu's offer to ease visa requirements was akin to Moldova's current agreement with Poland, which expedites the process for certain categories of travelers. Pasecinic said Basescu's promise to facilitate

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Moldovan requests for Romanian citizenship was a reflection of Romania's extremely bureaucratic system of granting citizenship, which some Moldovans have been unable to complete since first applying in the mid-1990s. She said it "does not mean that everyone will be able to get Romanian citizenship."

16. (C) Canadian Charge d' Affaires, Jean Therriault, who covers Moldova from Bucharest, opined to PolOff that Basescu had probably spoken "off the cuff." He noted that many Moldovans, "not just Russian speakers, but also Romanian speakers" as well as the current Moldovan government, did not welcome Basescu's suggestion. Therriault felt that Basescu's remarks reflected both his genuine belief in the eventual prospects for a Romanian-Moldovan union within the European Union as well as an over-eager attempt to appeal to nationalist elements in the Romanian electorate.

17. (U) Embassy's translation of President Basescu's remarks:

The speech of Traian Basescu, President of Romania, on the occasion of the lunch hosted for the children from the Republic of Moldova, winners of the "Olympics" competition in History

- Cotroceni Palace, July 1, 2006 -

Dear Sirs and Madams Professors,  
Dear Children,

First of all, I would like to thank you for accepting the invitation to have lunch with the President of Romania. It is a great honor for me that you accepted to spend an hour together.

At the same time, I would like you to know that I was extremely pleased when I heard that you accepted to change your program to accommodate this visit to Cotroceni. I hope that the change in your program will not prevent you to eventually visit Peles Castle - a monument worthwhile seeing

not on only for its beauty, but also for its place in our history, very much like Cotroceni Palace, where we are today. Cotroceni Palace is also part of Romanian history as much as everything else you have visited in Bucharest today.

I am glad that we can host in Bucharest very good students, winners of the "Olympics" competition in History, who are extremely knowledgeable in history. As good students in history, you know that Romania has denounced the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, which broke the Romanian nation in two. We accept the will of the authorities from Chisinau to stay apart from Romania, as an independent state, which carves out its own path to its Euro-Atlantic future.

For these reasons, I was one of the politicians who always supported the need to have a very good relationship with the Republic of Moldova, an open relationship that might be of help in assisting to speed-up the steps taken by the Republic of Moldova, to be able, in the not so distant future, to get again together, this time inside the European Union.

I would like you to know from me something that I would like to tell you -- to the extent I can tell you this -- that Romania has offered to the Republic of Moldova, to the Moldovan head of state, the option to join the European Union at the same time with us. It is however the decision of the authorities from Chisinau and of the people of the Republic of Moldova.

For me, your visit to Bucharest is a very important fact and it is in our policy to create conditions for as many children from the Republic of Moldova to come and study in Romania. Certainly next year we will increase the number of students from the Republic of Moldova who will be accepted as students in Romanian universities.

I ask you to be convinced that, when Romania will be a EU member, we will do whatever is necessary to prevent the border from becoming an impenetrable barrier for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova, and especially for the young people who really want to study (in Romania).

I believe the cultural links, the links between our national educational units, are instrumental in maintaining for the years to come the links between two countries that were once one country. We are the only country, the only people that is still divided. Germany has reunited its nation; Romania is still divided in two countries. But, I

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repeat, our unification will take place inside the European Union, not otherwise.

I thank you very much. I want to assure you that Romania will continue in the future to create conditions for the young people from the Republic of Moldova to learn and study in Romania to become useful in their country.

I want you also to know that immediately after our integration into the EU, in agreement with the European Commission, we will try to put in place a simplified visa system for the Republic of Moldova and, at the same time, to smooth the access of the citizens of Republic of Moldova to Romanian citizenship.

I thank you very much, I wish you bon appetite and I assure you that you are always welcomed in Romania, in other words welcomed in your own homeland.

Thank you very much!

End Translation.

18. (C) Comment: Basescu's formulations on Moldova at the July 1 event went beyond previous statements he has made on the

subject of the two countries' relationship. While he first raised the notion of a reunited Romania and Moldova within an expanded European Union in January in front of an audience of foreign diplomats, Saturday's media event was the first time Basescu has spoken in public of an "offer" for Moldova to join the European Union alongside Romania. On one level, it was a characteristic unscripted Basescu moment, the kind that makes his communications advisor cringe. Foreign Minister Ungureanu told the Ambassador around the margins of the July 4th reception that he had heard Basescu on one occasion raise the idea with Voronin of entering the EU together, but insisted that the Romanian president had presented it in a light vein. In fact, Basescu's apparently sincere interest in promoting a closer relationship between the two countries has both pluses and minuses. Since taking office, Basescu has, by most accounts, improved the climate between the two capitals considerably. Voronin and former Romanian president Iliescu, both Communist-era nomenclaturists, had famously cool relations. Bucharest has also actively campaigned within the EU and NATO for making Moldova a bigger priority. But as elsewhere in the Balkans, old ghosts do not simply go away quietly in the night. The vast majority of Romanians probably share Basescu's view that the two countries were separated unnaturally. And one of Basescu's principal advisors acknowledged to us privately last week that the Romanian president's political program has been built in the main on pounding the anti-corruption theme against the Social Democrat opposition and stealing the thunder, if not the extremism, of the nationalist Greater Romania party. We believe Romania can contribute positively to regional stability, as it has demonstrated in its Black Sea-oriented efforts, but it needs our help in constructively directing its energies towards the future horizon, rather than backwards over the historical fence. End Comment.

19. Amembassy Bucharest's reporting telegrams are available on the Bucharest SIPRNet website:

[www.state.gov.gov/p/eur/bucharest](http://www.state.gov.gov/p/eur/bucharest)

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